

Types of State Civil Service Exams

Written Tests are given in a wide variety of locations throughout California and test dates are often printed on the Examination Announcement. These tests typically consist of multiple-choice questions. Refer to the “Scope of Written Test” on the announcement to determine what will be on the test. Six to eight weeks after the test, you will receive a notice informing you whether or not you have passed.

Oral Tests / Interview (Qualifications Appraisal Interview) are paneled-interviews where each applicant is asked the same set of questions. In order to prepare, review the “Position”, “Examination Information”, and “Scope” sections of the Exam Announcement. Test questions are formed from these sections. There may be a pre-interview exercise incorporated as part of the oral test/interview (example: a writing assignment). The panel does not review nor has a copy of your Application. It is your answers to the exam’s questions that are scored by the panel to rate you competitively.

Online Internet / Automated Examinations

Exams for some jobs require applicants to apply via the Internet, complete an online education and experience assessment questionnaire, and/or schedule to appear at a test site to take a computer-based test. Information regarding these types of exams can be accessed from SPB website or at California State Parks’ Job Page. Most Internet based exams are “continuous-file” and allow you to complete the exam and receive your score immediately.

Performance Test

Clerical and trades classifications frequently have performance tests in which candidates demonstrate their knowledge of tools and materials or their ability to operate machines or equipment, such as Heavy Equipment Operator and Office Technicians (Typing tests).

Supplemental Application / Achievement Rating Test may consist of essay questions or a detailed questionnaire that are mailed out to candidates to be returned before the oral test/interview. They are used as an elaboration of your education and experience and to provide information to the interview panel.

Education and Experience Evaluation

If the Exam Announcement states there may be an Education and Experience (E&E) Evaluation, it is absolutely critical you fill out your Application Form as completely and thoroughly as possible. Your score in this type of exam may depend entirely upon the information submitted on your Application Form. There may not be a written test or interview.